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Attorneys for Plaintiff

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

DESMOND CARTER,

Plaintiff,

VS.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES; A

POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA; BONDELL

²¹ GOLDEN, an individual; DENNIS

BURNS, an individual; MARVIN

CAVANAUGH, an individual; AND

DOES 1 THRU 10 INCLUSIVE

Defendants.

L.A.C.Y 11-5543 THN USX

COMPLAINT FOR:

VIOLATIONS OF FEDERAL
CIVIL RIGHTS - ACTION
UNDER 42 U.S.C. §§1983, ET SEQ.
FOR THE UNLAWFUL
TAKING OF A PROPERTY
INTEREST AND LIBERTY
INTEREST WITHOUT DUE
PROCESS OF LAW PURSUANT
TO THE FIFTH
AND FOURTEENTH
AMENDMENTS TO THE
UNITED STATES
CONSTITUTION

JURY TRIAL DEMAND

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FACTS ONLY

Plaintiff Desmond Carter ("Carter") was a sworn peace 1. officer employed by the County of Los Angeles ("COLA") in the State of California pursuant to the provisions of Penal Code §830.31 and was a POST-Certified peace officer in the State of California, from 2005 until August, 2010, when he was deprived of his liberty and property interests illegally, by Defendants COLA, BONDELL GOLDEN, an individual; DENNIS BURNS, an individual; MARVIN CAVANAUGH, an individual; AND DOES 1 THRU 10 INCLUSIVE (Defendants). All parties to the action resided and worked in and for the County of Los Angeles.

- At all relevant times, Carter was an exceptional sworn police 2. officer and exceeded all qualifications for the job in every respect. Carter was further medically qualified to perform the peace officer position at the Office of Public Safety (OPS) and Los Angeles Sheriff's Department ("LASD").
- At all relevant times, Defendant COLA was and is a political 3. subdivision, and is responsible for the offices of the COUNTY SHERIFF.
- At all times herein mentioned, the individual defendants named 4. herein were employees, agents, and/or representatives of COLA and/or LASD. Consequently, each named individual defendant herein was operating under the color and authority of law.
- Further, at all times herein mentioned, the individual defendants 5. named herein were decision-makers in determining which former OPS officers would be dismissed from their peace officer jobs. At no time did any of the

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27 28 individual defendants named herein provide Carter with due process of law as required before an unlawful taking of a property interest and a reputation interest.

- Carter is unaware of the true names and capacities of the Defendants sued herein as DOES 1-10 inclusive, and therefore, sues these Defendants under such fictitious names. Carter is informed and believes and thereon alleges that each of said fictitiously named Defendants is responsible in some manner for the actions and damaged alleged herein. Carter is furthermore informed and believes and thereon alleges that each of said fictitiously named Defendants was the agent, servant and employee of each and every other Defendant acting within the course and scope of his or her agency and employment and with the knowledge, ratification and consent of each respective principal. Carter will seek leave to amend this Complaint when their true names and capacities have been ascertained.
- 7. At all times herein mentioned, 42 U.S.C. §1983, et seq. were in full force and effect. This statutory scheme was designed to prevent the deprivation of civil rights by individuals acting under the color of state or local law.
- In plain English: you cannot fire a police officer for alleged 8. misconduct without giving him a hearing, discussing it or letting him clear his name. Why? Because, it ruins his career for life. No agency will never hire you again if you were fired for misconduct. So, consistent with what the Framers intended, police officers like Carter are always entitled to a hearing where there is alleged misconduct. The Defendants took that right away from him.
- 9. In legal terms: "[U]nquestionably, a broad discretion reposes in governmental agencies to determine which [probationary] employees they will retain" [citation]. But there is an important exception to this rule, which is founded upon the Fourteenth Amendment. It arises where there is a deprival of the 'liberty' guaranteed all persons by that amendment's due process clause. The exception will

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be applied where the probationary employee's job termination, or dismissal, is based on charges of misconduct which 'stigmatize' his reputation, OR `seriously impair' his opportunity to earn a living [citation], or which `might seriously damage his standing or associations in his community' [citations]." (Lubey v. City and County of San Francisco (1979) 98 Cal. App. 3d 340, 345-346, fn. omitted (Lubey).)

- So Carter was entitled to a hearing BEFORE being fired, or in legal 10. terms: "Where there is such a deprival of a 'liberty interest' the employee's 'remedy mandated by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment is "an opportunity to refute the charge" [and] "to clear his name." [Citation.] He must be afforded '"notice and opportunity for hearing appropriate to the nature of the case" before the termination becomes effective." [Citation.] (Lubey, supra, 98 Cal.App.3d at p. 346, fn. omitted.)
- These rights are also entitlements under California law and this is not 11. a novel idea, to wit, the Bill of Rights Act applies to probationary peace officers. (Barnes v. Personnel Department (1978) 87 Cal. App. 3d 502, 504.) It permits the probationary peace officer the chance to establish a formal record of the circumstances surrounding his or her termination. (Id. at p. 506.) Also, Government Code section 3304 provides a peace officer "a chance to . . . try to convince his employer to reverse its decision " (Riveros v. City of Los Angeles (1996) 41 Cal. App. 4th 1342, 1359.) "Where there is such a deprival of a 'liberty interest' the employee's 'remedy mandated by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment is "an opportunity to refute the charge" [and] "to clear his name." [Citation.] He must be afforded `"`notice and opportunity for hearing appropriate to the nature of the case" before the

 termination becomes effective.''' [Citation.]" (*Lubey*, supra, 98 Cal.App.3d at p. 346, fn. omitted.).

- 12. In or about June 2010, the OPS and LASD merged, but at all times, Carter remained an employee of COLA. Nevertheless, as a result of the merger, Carter and the other OPS officers were reclassified as "probationary" employees, regardless of how much time they had already been employed by COLA, and regardless of whether or not they had previously passed their "probationary" periods.
- 13. As a result of the reclassification, Carter and the other OPS officers lost their rights, property interests and liberties.
- 14. The reclassification constitutes a violation of the Peace Officer Bill of Rights, which mandates that all employees of COLA who have been employed past their original probationary period when they were first hired, are deemed to have passed COLA's probationary period, and never get probation again just because they are given new uniforms. At the time COLA employees complete their probationary period, they become tenured employees.
- 15. In June 2010, Carter had already completed his probationary period with COLA, and had been an officer for 5 years, while with OPS. As such, there was no basis for COLA to deprive Carter of his vested "property" and "liberty" interests in his job simply because two COLA Departments merged.
- 16. In August., 2010, Carter was nearly killed by a drunk assailant named Ronald Teeman, who was recklessly driving around erratically and hitting things. Teeman was hammered and had just had a confrontation at a bar. Teeman then had a collision with Carter's car while driving in a parking lot. Carter asked Teeman to exchange information, and Teeman tried to escape,

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dragging Carter around the parking lot while incredibly drunk. As the Los Angeles Detectives and District Attorney determined, Carter had a DUTY to use force to stop this maniac. Carter, as a police officer had to stop this drunken maniac from driving around and hitting things.

- 17. In connection with the above incident, Carter discharged his weapon at drunk driver's vehicle, as he was a fleeing felon As a result, as is required every time a sworn peace officer discharges his weapon, COLA conducted an investigation into the incident. Carter was interviewed by Defendants in connection with the investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, on or about early 2011, Carter was informed by the Los Angeles District Attorney, that he was cleared of any wrongdoing.
- 18. In August, 2010, 6 days after the incident with the suspected drunk driver, Carter was Given a letter by the Defendants in this case, and the letter told Carter, that he lacked judgement, lacked common sense and was dangerous, and therefore was being fired.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION FOR VIOLATIONS OF FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS - ACTION UNDER 42 U.S.C. §§1983, ET SEQ. - FOR THE UNLAWFUL TAKING OF A PROPERTY INTEREST AND LIBERTY INTEREST WITHOUT DUE PROCESS OF LAW PURSUANT TO THE FIFTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENTS TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

(Against All Defendants)

19. Carter incorporates paragraphs 1 through 18 herein by reference, as if set forth in full.

- enforcement agency operated under the aegis and jurisdiction of Co-Defendant COLA and was considered to be an employee of COLA. At the time of his termination, Carter has passed his probationary period and could only be terminated for "good cause". Carter was NOT an "at will" employee who could be terminated with or without a good reason and with or without notice of that so-called "good reason". Before he could be effectively terminated from his peace officer position, Carter was entitled to a due process hearing ("Skelly-type" hearing or "liberty interest" hearing or any similar type of hearing with notice of the reasons for his particular dismissal from employment with COLA and the ability to challenge the so-called reasons before an impartial and neutral fact-finder and decision-maker).
- 21. Carter was accused of misconduct, lacking common sense, recklessly firing his weapon, and lacking judgment, all of which meant the loss of his job, career, reputation, liberty and property, all without a chance to clear his name, without notice and without a hearing.
- 22. As a result of Defendants' unlawful actions, Carter lost his POST certification, his career, livelihood and everything he ever worked for.

 Defendants simply took everything away from the Plaintiff illegally. Carter life has been destroyed and he and his wife live in fear of the criminals he arrested and to whom he was custodian.
- 23. Carter had a legitimate claim of entitlement to his career and chosen profession as a peace officer, which gave rise to a protected property interest and liberty interest that imposed a significant limitation on the discretion of the individual decision-makers and COLA. These interests arose both under state

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law and under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.

- 24. Carter also had a legitimate claim of entitlement to his reputation interest as a peace officer. This reputation interest also imposed a significant limitation on the discretion of the individual decision-makers.
- Carter was subjected to dismissal as a peace officer because of allegations 25. OF MISCONDUCT WITHOUT NOTICE OR A HEARING, EVEN THOUGH he had and/or has a liberty interest in his employment and in his reputation which is protected by the Due Process Clause of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, since his ultimate dismissal effectively precluded him from future work in his chosen profession.
- Defendants violated Carter's civil rights by making decisions 26. that affected his Fifth Amendment property interests and their reputation interests without providing him with due process of law under the Fourteenth Amendment. This action is redressable under 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983, et seq., and said statute also provides Carter the full panoply of remedies available under this federal statutory scheme.
- As a direct result of the unlawful deprivation of the federal civil 27. rights arising under this cause of action, Carter has sustained, and will continue to sustain for a period of time, compensatory damages, including, but not limited to, loss of income and lost future earning capacity, all in an amount according to proof at the trial of this action.
- 28. As a further direct result of the unlawful deprivation of his federal civil rights, Carter has sustained, and will continue to sustain for a period of time, general damages, including, but not limited to, loss of income and lost

1 future earning capacity, all in an amount according to proof at the trial of this 2 action. 3 Carter is entitled to his reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 29. 4 42 U.S.C. §1988(b). 5 Each named individual defendant herein acted with malice, 30. 6 oppression, and fraud, and therefore is liable in punitive damages in an amount 7 8 according to proof at trial. 9 10 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendants and each of 11 them as follows: 12 1. For special damages for the care and treatment of physical injuries and 13 emotional distress; 14 15 2. For general damages in a sum to be determined according to proof; 16 3. For punitive damages against individual defendants under applicable 17 causes of action; 18 19 4. For Declaratory relief under 42 U.S.C. Section 1983; 20 5. For Attorney's Fees under 42 U.S.C. Section 1988; 21 6. For costs of suit; and 22 23 7. For such other and further relief as this court may deem just and proper. 24 25 DATED: July 4, 2011 26 27 OKORIE OKOROCHA 28 Attorney for Plaintiff

DESMOND CARTER

JURY

JURY TRIAL DEMAND

Plaintiff hereby demands and requests a trial by jury.

DATED: July 4, 2011

OKORIE OKOROCHA Attorney for Plaintiff

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NOTICE OF ASSIGNMENT TO UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE FOR DISCOVERY

This case has been assigned to District Judge Jacqueline Nguyen and the assigned discovery Magistrate Judge is Suzanne H. Segal.

The case number on all documents filed with the Court should read as follows:

CV11- 5543 JHN (SSx)

Pursuant to General Order 05-07 of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, the Magistrate Judge has been designated to hear discovery related motions.

Failure to file at the proper location will result in your documents being returned to you.

Case 2:11-cv-05543-MWF-SS Document 1	
Name & Address: OKORIE OKOROCHA (State Bar No. 226658)	:
117 E. Colorado Blvd., Suite 465	
Pasadena, CA 91105	
626-792-1301 Telephone	en e
Email: okorie@gmail.com	
UNITED STATES I	DISTRICT COURT CT OF CALIFORNIA
DESMOND CARTER,	CASE NUMBER
PLAINTIFF(S	ACV11-5543 JHN (SSX)
County of Los Angeles; A Political Subdivision of the State of California; Bon dell Golden, an individual; Dennis	
Borns, an individual, Harvin Caranaugh, an individual; and Does I thru 10 inclusive DEFENDANT(S).	SUMMONS
must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached I	12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer KORIE OKOROCHA, whose address is A, CA 91105. If you fail to do so,
	Clerk, U.S. District Court
Dated:	By: Deputy Clerk
	(Seal of the Court)
[Use 60 days if the defendant is the United States or a United Stat 60 days by Rule 12(a)(3)].	les agency, or is an officer or employee of the United States. Allowed
	MONS .

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

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I (a) PLAINTIFFS (Check box if DESMOND CARTER	you are representing yourself [])		DEFENDANTS COUNTY OF LOS A STATE OF CALIFO BURNS, an individu	RNIA; BONDEL	L GOLDEN, an ind	hvidual; DENI	VIS
1 1 2	1	t cets	THRU 10 INCLUSI	VE			
(b) Attorneys (Firm Name, Addreyourself, provide same.)	ess and Telephone Number. If you	are representing	Attorneys (If Known)		<u></u>		
OKORIE OKOROCHA (Sta	nte Bar No. 226658)		January 1980 Mariananananananan		`		
117 E. Colorado Blvd. • Suit — Pasadena, California 91101	te 465						:
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION	(Place an X in one box only.)	III. CITIZE (Place a	NSHIP OF PRINCIPAL n X in one box for plaintif	PARTIES - For f and one for defe	Diversity Cases On ndant.)	nly	
1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)	Citizen of Th	is State		incorporated or Prin of Business in this S	cipal Place	PTF DEF
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizent of Parties in Item III)	ship Citizen of A	nother State		Incorporated and Pri of Business in Anot		□5 □5
		Citizen or St	abject of a Foreign Countr	у □3 □3	Foreign Nation	····	□6 □6
IV. ORIGIN (Place an X in one	box only.)						
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□ 460 Deportation	Overpayment &	Slander	Propert	y Damage 🖂 535	Death Penalty	Report	ting &
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Organizations	☐ 151 Medicare Act	☐ 340 Marine	BANKRUI	TCY 🔯 🖂 550	Civil Rights	☐ 790 Other	Labor
☐ 480 Consumer Credit	☐ 152 Recovery of Defaulted	☐ 345 Marine Pr	oduct 422 Appeal	28 USC 13555	Prison Condition	Litiga	tion
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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Case Number ACV 11-5543

AFTER COMPLETING THE FRONT SIDE OF FORM CV-71, COMPLETE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BELOW.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

VIII(a) IDENTICAL CASES: Has the fyes, list case number(s):	nis action been previo	sly filed in this court and dismissed, remanded or closed? Si	√No □Yes			
	ny cases been previo	ly filed in this court that are related to the present case? M	No 🗆 Yes			
Civil cases are deemed related if a pr	awlanchy filed seen a	I the procent case	A continuate formation and a continuation of the continuation of t			
		losely related transactions, happenings, or events; or				
		the same or substantially related or similar questions of law	and fact, or			
		entail substantial duplication of labor if heard by different ju	idges; or			
D , I n	volve the same pater	trademark or copyright, and one of the factors identified about	ove in a, b or c also is present.			
IX. VENUE: (When completing the fo	ollowing information	ise an additional sheet if necessary.)				
(a) List the County in this District, Co	alifornia County out:	le of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign C	Country, in which EACH named plaintiff resides.			
Check here if the government, its County in this District.*	agencies or employe		istrict; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country			
Los Angeles						
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(b) List the County in this District; C Check here if the government, its	California County out	de of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign (s s is a named defendant. If this box is checked, go to item (c	Country, in which EACH named defendant resides.			
County in this District:*		California County outside of this D	District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country			
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(c) List the County in this District; (Note: In land condemnation ca County in this District.* Los Angleles			Country, in which EACH claim arose. District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country			
* Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernar Note: In land condemnation cases, us	dino, Riverside, Ve	iura, Santa Barbara, or San Luis Obispo Counties				
	[July 4, 2011			
X. SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY (~					
or other papers as required by lay	 This form, approve 	Cover Sheet and the information contained herein neither really the Judicial Conference of the United States in Septembe statistics, venue and initiating the civil docket sheet. (For more	r 1974, is required pursuant to Local Rule 3-1 is not filed			
Key to Statistical codes relating to So	ocial Security Cases:					
Nature of Suit Code	Abbreviation	Substantive Statement of Cause of Action				
861	HIA	All claims for health insurance benefits (Medicare) under Title 18, Part A, of the Social Security Act, as amended. Also, include claims by hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, etc., for certification as providers of services under the program. (42 U.S.C. 1935FF(b))				
862	BL	All claims for "Black Lung" benefits under Title 4, Part B, of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. (30 U.S.C. 923)				
863	DIWC	All claims filed by insured workers for disability insurance benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as americled; plus all claims filed for child's insurance benefits based on disability. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))				
863	DIWW	All claims filed for widows or widowers insurance benefits based on disability under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))				
864	SSID	All claims for supplemental security income payments based upon disability filed under Title 16 of the Social Security Act, as amended.				
865	RSI	All claims for retirement (old age) and survivors benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. (g))				